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79 KABUL 2238

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PAGE 01 KABUL 02238 251441Z
ACTION NEA-11
INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SY-05 CIAE 00 INR-10 NSAE-00
DODE-00 PA-01 ICA-11 SP-02 SS-15 NSC-05 H-01
/062 W
----------071038 260053Z /23

R 250837Z MAR 79
FM AMEMBASSY KABUL
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2935
INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
LIMITED OFFICIAL USE KABUL 2238
E.O. 12065: N/A
TAGS: ASEC, PINS, AF
SUBJECT: ABDUCTION AND DEATH OF AMBASSADOR DUBS: LANGUAGE SITUATION AT THE KABUL HOTEL

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
REVIEWED BY MDeCapua DATE 3-13-81
RDS☐or XDS☐EXT. DATE
TS AUTH. REASON(S)
ENDORSE EXISTING MARKINGS ☐
DECLASSIFIED☐ RELEASABLE☒
RELEASE DENIED☐
PA or FOI EXEMPTIONS

1. THE EMBASSY HAS RECENTLY RECEIVED PRESS CLIPPINGS WHICH INDICATE THAT SOME CONGRESSMEN AND NEWSMEN THOUGHT THAT LANGUAGE DIFFICULTIES MIGHT HAVE BEEN AN IMPEDIMENT TO THE EMBASSY'S HANDLING OF AFFAIRS AT THE KABUL HOTEL DURING THE FEBRUARY 14 ABDUCTION AND DEATH OF AMBASSADOR DUBS.
2. TO SET THE RECORD STRAIGHT, SUCH WAS DEFINITELY NOT THE CASE. AMONG THE SEVERAL AMERICAN OFFICERS AT THE HOTEL WERE MEN POSSESSING WORKING COMMANDS OF DARI (AFGHAN PERSIAN), ARABIC GERMAN, AND RUSSIAN. ADDITIONALLY, THERE WAS ALSO PRESENT AN EMBASSY FSN WHO COULD INTERPRET DARI AND PUSHTU (ANOTHER IMPORTANT AFGHAN LANGUAGE). SERGEY G. BAKATURIN, ONE OF KEY SOVIET OFFICIALS AT THE SCENE, AS WELL AS SEVERAL OF THE KAY AFGHAN OFFICIALS THERE, SPOKE GOOD ENGLISH. GERMAN WAS USED WITH THE SENIOR SOVIET POLICE ADVISOR AND SEVERAL GERMAN-TRAINED AFGHAN POLICE.

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3. AMERICAN OFFICIALS WERE NOT PRIVY TO MOST CONVERSATIONS BETWEEN SOVIET AND AFGHAN OFFICIALS BECAUSE THE LATTER MADE A POINT OF SEEKING PRIVACY AT THOSE TIMES (E.G. WHISPERING IN FAR CORNERS OF THE LOBBY OR GOING INTO OTHER ROOMS).
4. THE EMBASSY ALSO HAS NOTED WITH SURPRISE SOME OTHER NEWS REPORTS WHICH SUGGESTED CRITICALLY THAT WE SHOULD SOMEHOW HAVE INTERPOSED OUR FEW U.S. MARINE SECURITY GUARDS BETWEEN THE LARGE FORCE OF AFGHAN TROOPS AND POLICE IN THE HOTEL AND THE DOOR OF ROOM 117, THEREBY TAKING OVER DIRECT CONTROL OF THE OPERATIONAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE CRISIS. THIS CRITICISM REQUIRES NO COMMENT.
AMSTUTZ
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